



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

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### **Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille concludes South East Asia Outreach Programme**

The Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille, has concluded South Africa's South East Asia outreach programme, reaffirming the region as a strategic growth corridor for the country's tourism economy and underscoring that tourism is economic policy in action.

Tourism arrivals from the region are showing encouraging momentum. From Singapore, South Africa recorded 9,827 arrivals, reflecting a 4.7% year-on-year increase. Malaysia contributed 7,773 arrivals, delivering a strong 17.3% year-on-year growth, while Indonesia recorded nearly 3,000 arrivals, providing a solid foundation for further market expansion.

The outreach programme began in Singapore, a key aviation hub for South Africa, where the Minister engaged with among others, the Minister of National Development Alvin Tan and the Changi Airport Group on expanding airlift and improving connectivity. The discussions focused on increasing competition and affordability to unlock greater travel demand between South East Asia and South Africa.

In Malaysia, the Minister held constructive engagements with Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture Dato' Sri Tiong King Sing, where both parties agreed that ease of travel remains central to tourism growth. The discussions included exploring airlift opportunities, including the potential involvement of low-cost carriers. These engagements are particularly significant ahead of President Cyril Ramaphosa hosting Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim later this year, with a shared objective of demonstrating tangible progress in travel flows between the two countries.

In Indonesia, the Minister signed a Tourism Memorandum of Understanding with her Tourism counterpart Minister Widiyanti Putri Wardhana, marking a significant milestone in bilateral cooperation. The MoU provides a framework for collaboration across sustainable tourism, skills development, marketing and promotion, tourism investment, safety and service standards, research, and broader regional cooperation. The first joint working group meeting is scheduled to take place within the next three weeks.

These efforts are supported by South Africa's Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) system, which allows travellers from Indonesia, China, India and Mexico to apply online and receive outcomes within 24 hours, often sooner.

"There is significant potential to grow visitor numbers from Indonesia to South Africa, and we are making it easier than ever. Through our Electronic Travel Authorisation system, Indonesian travellers are now exempt from visa fees. Applications can be completed online,

from your phone or computer, and responses are typically received within 24 hours, often sooner”, says Minister de Lille

South Africa is also diversifying Tourism offering with many developments taking place: “In June last year, we launched the Kgodumodumo Dinosaur Interpretation Centre, home to the discovery of the world’s oldest dinosaur embryo. Over 2 million years old. And this June, along South Africa’s warm Indian Ocean coastline, we will open Luxury French bran Club Med’s first resort in Southern Africa, in KwaZulu-Natal. This is a R2.5 billion investment, and a strong vote of confidence in our tourism sector and its returns,” says Minister de Lille.

In each of the three countries Minister De Lille hosted Tourism Infrastructure Investment Dinners, showcasing South Africa’s R1 billion investment pipeline to possible investors, banks and business leaders.

The Department of Tourism will now focus on converting engagement into arrivals, arrivals into spend, and spend into jobs, positioning South East Asia as an increasingly important contributor to South Africa’s tourism growth trajectory.

## **THE END**

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